Statement-V

The number of Sugar Mills which have not gone into production since 1994-95 to 1996-97 season.

State No.	No. of Factories
1. Punjab	1
2. U.P.	1
3. Gujarat	2
4. Maharashtra	2
5. Bihar	11
6. Orissa	1
7. Andhra Pradesh	4
8. Karnataka	1
9. Tamil Nadu	1
10. Kerala	2
All India	26

Measures to restructure the functioning of FCI

3719. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have intitiated measures to restructure the functioning of Food Corporation of India decentralising its operations and marketing strategies cutting substantially the operational costs;

(b) if so, the details of the changed role being assigned to FCI to make targeted PDS a success and ensure food safety and price stability for foodgrains; and

(c) whether Government are considering extension of import of wheat under OGL beyond 31st March, 1997 upward revision of wheat procurement prices, impose ban on inter-State movement of foodgrains and take appropriate measures for effective control on hoarding?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

Wheat import for Poor

3720. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether more wheat import is need to make available foodgrains to the poor at reasonable rates as domestic farmers did not sell Rabi yield; and

(b) whether adequate godowns arrangement nas been made to stock the imported wheat?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Government have already decided to import upto 4.00 million tonnes of wheat during 1996-97 and 1997-98 to augment its availability in the country, and a quantity of 26.75 lakh tonnes has already been contracted for import. Government keep on reviewing the stock position of foodgrains in the Central Pool with reference to the production of foodgrains in the Central Pool with reference to the production of foodgrains, procurement trend, requirement for the Public Distribution System/ Other Welfare Schemes, open market prices to ensure adequate availability of foodgrains in the country.

(b) Yes, Sir.

Dwindling of wheat stock despite imports

3721. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether wheat Stock has considerably dwindled despite imports, threatening an unprecedented wheat shortage;

(b) if so, the extent to which wheat stock has been reduced on 1st April, 1997

as against the stock in the corresponding period in 1995-96;

(c) the extent to which the shortage is against the buffer stock requirement; and

(d) the measures taken by Government to replenish the wheat stock to avoid wheat crisis?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) to (c) The estimated stock of wheat in the Central Pool as on 1st April, 1996 and 1997 and the minimum stock required to be maintained as per buffer norm are given below:—

(in lakh tonnes)

As on	Minimum buffer norm	Stock of wheat
1.4.1995	37.00	87.20 (P)
1.4.1996	37.00	77.62 (P)
1.4.1997	37.00	32.40 (P)

P- Provisional subject to revision.

(d) The measures taken by the Government to replenish the wheat stock include the following:—

(i) Decision to import upto 4 million tonnes of wheat during 1996-97 and 1997-98.

(ii) Increase in the procurement price of wheat during 1997-98 by Rs.95/- per quintal (including bonus) over the price paid during the previous year.

(iii) Making adequate arrangements for procuring all the quantities of wheat conforming to the prescribed specifications offered for sale by farmers at the procurement price fixed.

(iv) Decision not to allow any export of wheat and wheat products during 1997-98 and retain licensing and stock holding limits of wheat besides placing the wheat under Selective Credit Control.

FCI faces MRTPC probe for Rice overpricing

3722. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news-item published in the "Business Standard", dated 28th November, 1996, captioned "Food Corporation faces MRTPC probe for overpricing rice";

(b) the details of the investigation;

(c) the status of the investigation; and

(d) the reaction of the Government?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Director General of Investigation & Registration (DGIR) has filed an application with the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) on the ground that the Food Corporation of India has overcharged the customers in the State of Kerala. The application of DGIR is based on the C&AG Report that the Food Corporation of India has overcharged the consumers by issuing lower group of rice in higher group in the State of Kerala. The C&AG has alleged that the Food Corporation of India has earned an amount of Rs. 418.71 lakhs and customers have been overcharged to that extent.

(c) The case came up for hearing on 2.5.1997. The MRTPC has now issued notice for 11th September, 1997.

(d) The case is subjudice.